

## Meeting Notes – Responsible Leather Stakeholder Meeting

Monday, April 24, 2017

### 1. Intro and Welcome

#### TE's Team

- Alexandre (Alex) Boursier – alexandre@textileexchange.org
- Stefanie Pokorski – stefanie@textileexchange.org
- Hanna Denes – hanna@textileexchange.org
- Anne Gillespie – anne@textileexchange.org

#### Participants

We have 70+ organizations and 150+ individuals who have agreed to be involved in this process, even if it is just on a keep-informed basis. IWG is in the works.

#### Chatham House Rules & Anti-Trust Declaration

### 2. Website Launch – <https://responsibleleather.org/>

- A place for everyone to connect and access resources, meeting notes, and to see when the next meeting is scheduled
- IWG – Please give permission to add your name to group
  - one of the world's largest meat/leather suppliers has already asked about who is engaging in this work, so it is very helpful to put down the names of brands
- We also have a new address that will allow you to reach all of us at once:  
[ResponsibleLeather@TextileExchange.org](mailto:ResponsibleLeather@TextileExchange.org)
- Check the site for regular updates

### 3. Updates – Anne at Leather Events in Hong Kong

- Asia Pacific Leather Fair
  - Got a good sense of the size of the leather industry (it's huge!)
  - Made some good contacts
  - Leather companies all emphasized how hard traceability would be, but the right contacts may be able to help
- BLC Sustainability in the Leather Supply Chain Event
  - Good presentations on the use of DNA technology for traceability, the management of chemicals, foot printing and a supply chain panel discussion
  - One of the questions that TE is being regularly asked is about how we will be working with the Leather Working Group, and the work they are doing

to research animal welfare issues in the supply chain. Anne had the chance to talk with LWG, and it was made clear that their work will be kept for the use of LWG members only, and that it will not become part of what we are doing in this initiative. However, we did agree to keep an open dialogue.

#### 4. News and Information

- PETA Campaign against H&M
  - Urge H&M to Stop Selling Animal Skins; targets JBS, one of the largest leather suppliers
  - Highlights numerous animal welfare issues
- H&M Press Release in response
  - Joining forces with TE on leather work
- Indian government commitment to not slaughtering cows
  - 3000+ illegal slaughterhouse in India
  - many shut down in Uttar Pradesh
- Princeton Study on SAN in Brazil – Key Points
  - Comprehensive standard for cattle raising in Brazil
  - See full document at <https://responsibleleather.org/resources/documents/>

#### 5. Issues and Discussion

##### Food for Thought

- Timeline – 2017 Work Plan
  - <https://responsibleleather.org/resources/documents/>
- Elaborating Terms of Reference
  - TE Standard Setting and Revision Procedure dictates that ToRs need to be elaborated
  - Will ultimately be determined by the steering committee
  - What points do we need to cover in the ToRs?
    - Identify clear objectives
      - What do we want to achieve?
    - Justification for the need of the standard
      - Why are we doing this?
    - Identify the scope
      - Are we creating a standard?
      - What kind of system are we creating?
      - What will it cover? What will we leave out?
    - Identify existing standards
      - Do any standards exist that currently address similar materials or issues?
    - Assessment of the risks and how to mitigate them

- Risks are inevitable
- Mitigate by communicating within our working group

\*\*Discussion – Questions & Comments (See below)

Stakeholders

- We are once again very brand-heavy (a good thing for now) but want to get much better representation from the rest of the supply chain, so if any of you can contacts you can introduce us to, please do so.
- Identify focused Task Groups:
  - Focus on a specific issue
  - Time limited – a few calls to look at an issue and do some research to bring Opportunity to contribute or just learn
  - Suggested topics:
    - Issues & Initiatives: animal welfare, land management, greenhouse gases, worker welfare/slavery, traceability
  - Strategic Committee (may end up being the Steering Committee)
    - Looking at the proposed structure, it may need more balance

**6. Closing & Action Items**

Action items

- Permission to have your name posted on the website for the IWG
- Stakeholder suggestions
- Sign up for task groups (or suggest people to invite)
- Survey
- **Let us know if you can give us some funding support**

**\*\*Discussion – Questions & Comments**

Questions

- 1.) Do we have in our group any livestock producers or slaughterhouse to work with?
  - a. We are working on getting more contacts in these areas – currently have JBS, Marfrig, Minerva, and some North American Cattleman associations, but need more representation around the globe
  - b. Not well represented right now – but really need to focus on – need their expertise

- 2.) Are we going to take into consideration religious (Kosher, Halal, etc) slaughter that is claimed to reduce a lot of suffering?
  - a. We are familiar with the issues
  - b. Committed to collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach, and so this could be looked at more in depth by one of the focus groups
  - c. The steering committee will make the final decision
- 3.) How can the leather value chain influence the beef industry?
  - a. Since leather is a co-product/by-product it will be very difficult
  - b. Our strategy is to try to partner with the food supply chain and find a way to bring value into it

### Comments

- 1.) We need to create a standard
  - a. We don't need to change the industry
  - b. A lot of leather is coming from places where sustainability is already a focus
  - c. We should recognize the good work that is currently being done; a standard will help unify all this work
- 2.) Would like to see this as a global standard
  - a. Want to create a fully transparent supply chain where you can trace the material directly back to the animal
  - b. Problems occur at the slaughterhouse
  - c. It is a good idea to work with the food industry for implementation
- 3.) Would be best as an initiative
  - a. Standard have many limitations with cost and other implementation difficulties
  - b. Split incentives with the beef industry
- 4.) Good standards are already in place, and this should be a standard that recognizes existing programs
  - a. Good initiatives in Brazil right now
  - b. Meat industry standards are operating – take a look at those
  - c. Traceability after the slaughterhouse is the problem
- 5.) What are we aiming for?
  - a. A little bit of everything
  - b. Forgotten – social aspect – should we include it or not? Often overlooked and gaining more interest, particularly in Europe
- 6.) Really need to narrow down our focuses
  - a. Identify the main few aspects we want to address
  - b. Distinction and critical aspects
  - c. look for best practices that are already in place
- 7.) Food industry – should we reach out to dairy industries?
  - a. Small percentage of leather comes from them
  - b. Unilever and other major companies are focusing on that